

Chapter Seven

As the volume moves ahead apace, in this chapter Le Donne concentrates his attention on what he calls 'Jesus' Temple Procession' known to the rest of us as the Triumphal Entry. He draws on the 'memories' provoked by such texts as Ps 118, Zech 9, and 1 Kings 1 which he says '...have influenced this event and how it was remembered in the Jesus tradition' (p. 191). But why the new nomenclature? 'While contemporary readers often refer to this as Jesus' triumphal entry, the historical backdrop suggests otherwise. Jesus' procession served to highlight his rejection by Jerusalem's leadership and foreshadow his opposition to the temple establishment' (p. 195). Le Donne may very well be on to something- when we think in terms of the reaction of the crowds and priests. But the readers of the Gospels, the recipients and the transmitters of the tradition (or memory) would have applied, it seems to me, a christological interpretation to the event and seen it as a step towards Jesus' ultimate glorification on the Cross.

To say it another way, the Priests may have been considered the last week of Jesus anything but a resounding victory for him and his, but Jesus' followers would have thought of it quite differently.

And as was true of the previous chapters, Le Donne's exegesis is very precise. So, given that simple fact, he may indeed be right. Even if he isn't, his new way of seeing things is certainly worth considering.

Chapter Eight

This chapter seems to have been difficult for Le Donne as he sort of founders at it and in it. And I think he recognizes this since he writes 'Due to the difficulties with respect to origin and meaning, the Son of David Question does little to clarify the question of Jesus' relationship to the title' (p. 221). Which is, I think, a shame since this is the last substantive chapter (before the conclusion) and being the weakest doesn't really allow the reader to come away with the right recognition of the achievement that Le Donne has certainly managed. But the chapter does have the distinction of offering the understatement of the year when Le Donne notes 'Unfortunately, not every text in the HB has a discernible (and chartable) life between its oldest recognizable form and its NT usage' (p. 231). Indeed!

The chapter focuses primarily (if waveringly) on Psalm 110 in its 'tradition-memory' contexts and its Markan context. 'If the Markan Jesus was utilizing Psalm 110 to make a claim of sacral authority, such a claim would have been perceived as a threat by the Jerusalem temple establishment' (p. 248). And I don't imagine anyone would argue with that. Le Donne concludes 'Son of David is best understood to be a title employed not by the earliest memories of Jesus but rather a mnemonic frame employed by later Christianity to assimilate pre-Christian memories of Jesus into more fully developed Christology' (p. 257). Nor, I suppose, would anyone argue with that.

Chapter Nine

The concluding analysis draws all of the various ideas presented in the volume and attempts to congeal them into a brief but meaningful overview. So Le Donne reminds (!) his readers of the mnemonic cycle, the typological cycle, diachronic continuity, and historical memory. And asserts with a fair amount of confidence that he has attempted to demonstrate '... that the first perceptions of Jesus were bent and distorted through the mnemonic process like light is bent and distorted through a lens. ... The historical Jesus is the memorable Jesus; he is the one who set refraction trajectories in motion...' (p. 268).

Did he prove his case? I think he did, to a degree. But I think the importance of this work isn't that it answers all the questions historical Jesus research has raised; it's importance is the setting forth

of a new methodology that may well help us move beyond the impasse that has bedeviled the quest for the historical Jesus since Bultmann put down his sacred pen. Le Donne is to be congratulated for that.